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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0121
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0684
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3236
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2333
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1676

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PHNOM PENH 000932

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP, DRL, IO, P, D
USUN FOR AMB. PLAISTED

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SUBJECT: CAMBODIA STILL CONSIDERING RESOLUTIONS ON IRAN,
BURMA, DPRK

REF: STATE 117889

Classified By: POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION CHIEF GREG LAWLESS FOR REASON
S 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: MFA Secretary of State Ouch told DCM October 18 that the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) was probably still maintaining its position from last year on UNGA Third Committee human rights resolutions, noting that Japan had once again demarched in favor of the DPRK human rights resolution. Ouch Borith indicated that there may be a distinction between the official Cambodian line (more consistent with NAM) and its actual votes. Although Ouch Borith made representations that he would try to help change the official line to be more consistent with that of the U.S., it appears an appeal for strategic absences is likely the most fruitful course. END SUMMARY.

The U.S. is Watching

¶2. (C) DCM made strong representations based on reftel, noting that the U.S. would be closely watching this UNGA Third Committee vote. (NOTE: Ouch Borith formerly served as Cambodia's USUN PermRep and has overall responsibility for the U.S. relationship. END NOTE.) Ouch Borith noted that Cambodia was inclined to maintain its official position of last year but that he would ask Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hor Namhong to reconsider the overall stand. Cambodia, a small country, felt that it was in a difficult position between the United States and like-minded states on the one hand and the NAM countries on the other. Officially, Cambodia supported the proposition that human rights were the internal affairs of nations, except in those cases that were brought to the Human Rights Council (HRC). The HRC's role, he averred, was to provide assistance to nations to address their human rights situations.

¶3. (C) On the DPRK, Ouch Borith stated that Japan had asked Cambodia to vote in favor of the resolution, as the RGC had done last year. However, even there, Cambodia had different types of "close" relations with both countries and the decision was not easy. (NOTE: Japan is the largest provider of development assistance to Cambodia. Former King Sihanouk had developed close relations with the DPRK and still depends on North Korean body guards. Since the ascension of King Norodom Sihamoni, however, Cambodia has developed much stronger and growing economic and cultural relations with South Korea. END NOTE.)

Cambodia Considering

¶4. (C) On Iran and Burma, Ouch Borith alluded to the collective pressure from states to support no-action motions. Acknowledging that Burma was an increasing embarrassment for ASEAN, and that Cambodia wished for Burma to learn from the Cambodian experience in moving toward greater democratization, he noted the RGC's representations to Myanmar to exhibit greater flexibility.

¶5. (C) The RGC felt great pressure from both sides on this debate at the UN, Ouch Borith noted. Nonetheless, he would ensure that the RGC gave the U.S. proposal the utmost consideration.

UNSC Candidacy Going Well

¶6. (C) On Cambodia's candidacy to become a non-permanent member of the UNSC in 2013-2014, Ouch Borith noted that some 63 countries had already offered letters of support. (NOTE: This includes all ASEAN nations. END NOTE.)

COMMENT

¶7. (C) In so many words, Ouch Borith was signaling it would be difficult for the RGC to shift from its official stance, reinforced in part by its own involvement with a special rapporteur in the Human Rights Council. However, he clearly understood the import of the Iran vote and that Cambodia's yes vote could be seen to be deciding, whereas its absence could be strategically advantageous. He seemed to apply the same calculus to Burma. Hence our efforts to reinforce

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strategic absences by Cambodia's PermRep might bear fruit. Whether Cambodia will vote in favor of a human rights resolution on North Korea, as it did last year, is by no means settled.

¶8. (C) Per reftel request, Post adjudges the best incentive to Cambodia is a call from Ambassador Khalilzad to the Cambodian PermRep, to reinforce the significance we attach to these Third Committee resolution votes.
RODLEY